

Statement on Signing the Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY 2001 *December 21, 2000*

I have signed into law H.R. 4577, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, FY 2001. I am pleased that my Administration and the Congress were able to reach agreement on the remaining appropriations bills and produce a hard-won victory for the American people.

The legislation reflects my Administration's longstanding commitment to education, worker training and assistance, and medical research, and continued opposition to unrelated anti-environmental riders, which have no place in these appropriation bills. As a result of extensive negotiations, my Administration was able to secure significant funding increases for many programs that represent significant victories for the American people, including teacher training, class size reduction, worker protection programs, and mental health programs.

I am very pleased that the legislation creates a new \$1.2 billion school renovation grant program, targeted to high-need districts. It provides \$0.9 billion for urgent school repairs, including \$75 million for public schools with high concentrations of Native American students, \$0.3 billion for special education and technology-related activities, and \$25 million for a demonstration program to assist charter schools in obtaining non-Federal financing for their infrastructure needs. The initiative will enable schools to undertake much-needed renovation, such as repairs to roofs, heating and cooling systems, and electrical wiring.

The bill also provides \$1.6 billion for the third installment of my plan to help reduce class size in the early grades. While the Republican proposal did not guarantee funding for the teachers already hired and would have instead allowed Class Size dollars to be used for virtually any activity, I am pleased that the bill that I have signed provides \$1.6 billion for Class Size Reduction, enough to support the over 29,000 teachers already hired, plus an additional 8,000 teachers.

I am also pleased that the budget agreement provides \$567 million for my Teaching to High Standards plan to improve teacher preparation and help train teachers to meet higher standards. This funding level is \$194 million more than last year's level. The bill includes \$485

million for Eisenhower Professional Development State Grants, providing training for as many as 2.3 million teachers and strengthening accountability by requiring that States and districts use new Eisenhower funds to reduce the number of uncertified teachers in their schools. The bill also provides \$44 million for new national-level activities, including initiatives to train early childhood educators and measures to recruit talented mid-career professionals into teaching.

The legislation provides \$846 million for 21st Century Community Learning Centers to support after school and summer school programs that make extended learning opportunities available for students and offer a safe place for "latch-key" children to learn during the after-school hours. At this funding level, nearly 650,000 more students than last year will have access to these services.

I am very pleased that Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies are funded at \$8.4 billion, an increase of \$0.4 billion more than last year, to continue efforts to help disadvantaged students catch up with their peers. In addition, the bill supports my Accountability Fund proposal by providing \$225 million, an increase of \$91 million, to help States turn around the lowest-performing schools and hold schools accountable for results. This funding level will provide help to 4,500 schools, an increase of 1,800 over last year.

I am pleased that the bill provides an increase in funding to \$286 million for the Reading Excellence Initiative. This program supports literacy services for children, including local reading programs, teacher training, tutoring programs, and family literacy services. With this funding, all the remaining States and territories will be able to receive grants, bringing the number of children served to 3.1 million.

I am pleased that the budget agreement provides \$872 million for educational technology that will be used to fund programs that train an additional 110,000 teachers to effectively use modern technology in the classroom. The bill also provides a \$32 million increase for Community Technology Centers, creating up to 650 centers that provide access to computers and

Information Age tools to children and adults that cannot afford them at home.

The bill includes \$125 million for the Small, Safe and Successful High Schools program, \$80 million above the FY 2000 enacted level. The additional funds will help over 1,000 of the Nation's high schools implement smaller, more intimate learning environments through reforms like schools-within-schools and career academies.

I strongly support the \$190 million provided in the legislation for the Charter Schools program. The additional funds will support the startup of nearly 500 new or redesigned schools that offer enhanced public school choice and the freedom to pursue innovative educational programs. At the beginning of my Administration, there was only one charter school. With this increase, the Charter School program will have supported over 2,800 charter schools.

I also support the \$644 million provided in the bill for Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities programs. Within this amount, the bill contains \$35 million to expand the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative; \$50 million for the middle school Coordinator Initiative; and \$10 million for Project School Emergency Response to Violence, to provide emergency assistance, such as crisis counseling and increased security, to school districts that experience a violent or traumatic crisis.

I strongly support the \$7.4 billion for Special Education programs, an increase of \$1.4 billion over the FY 2000 enacted level. Included in this total is \$6.3 billion for Special Education State Grants. The bill also provides my requested increase for Grants for Infants and Families, for a total of \$384 million.

I am very pleased that the bill contains a major increase in funding for Pell Grants. The bill provides \$8.8 billion to support a \$3,750 maximum award.

The bill includes \$295 million for GEAR-UP. Compared to last year, this funding level provides needed college preparation services to nearly 500,000 more low-income students. Equally important is the funding provided in the bill for TRIO, which receives \$730 million and will help 765,000 disadvantaged students attend and complete college.

I am pleased that the Congress fully funded my \$1 billion request for Federal Work-Study. This level continues to enable one million students to work their way through college.

I am pleased that the legislation provides over \$1 billion in increases to programs included in my Administration's Hispanic Education Action Plan (HEAP). These programs help to improve overall the educational outcomes of Latino and limited English proficient students by increasing their levels of academic achievement, high school graduation, post-secondary participation, and opportunities for lifelong learning.

I commend the Congress for including \$70 million for my English Language/Civics Initiative, nearly triple last year's funding. This program helps States and communities provide recent immigrants and other limited English proficient individuals with expanded access to quality English-language instruction linked to civics education, including understanding the U.S. Government and public education systems, the workplace, and other key institutions of American life. Funding for this initiative in FY 2001 will provide services for almost 250,000 individuals.

The bill includes \$306 million for Education Research, Statistics, and Assessment. The funds will provide additional support for the Inter-agency Educational Research Initiative, the new Birth Cohort of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, and new grants for the Initiative on Language Minority Students, a program that seeks better ways to educate children whose first language is not English.

The bill provides \$11.9 billion in discretionary funds for the Department of Labor (DOL), a \$0.7 billion increase above the FY 2000 enacted level. The funding provided supports my major proposals for job training, worker protection programs, and grants for working with developing countries to eliminate abusive child labor.

I am pleased that the legislation provides \$1.6 billion for dislocated worker assistance. The program will provide training and re-employment services to 883,000 dislocated workers. Since FY 1993, my Administration has succeeded in almost tripling funding for, and participation in, programs that help dislocated workers return to work. In addition, the bill includes \$35 million of the \$50 million I requested to provide job-finding assistance to 156,000 unemployment insurance claimants to speed their reentry into the workforce.

The bill provides nearly my full request to expand services to job seekers at One-Stop centers as recently authorized in the bipartisan Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The bill funds

\$150 million of the \$154 million requested to provide improved access to One-Stops as well as continued support for electronic labor exchange and labor market information. The enrolled bill also fully funds my \$20 million request for work incentive grants to help integrate employment services for persons with disabilities into the mainstream One-Stop system.

The bill provides \$55 million for the Responsible Reintegration of Youth Offenders (RRYO) initiative. RRYO will bring roughly 10,300 young ex-offenders into the workplace through job training, placement, and support services, and by creating new partnerships between the criminal justice system and the WIA system. In addition, the enrolled bill includes \$20 million to enable DOL to contribute to the Safe Schools/Healthy Students joint initiative with the Departments of Justice, Education, and Health and Human Services that will expand efforts to address out-of-school youth.

The enrolled bill also provides additional funding for other youth job training programs. Specifically the bill includes \$275 million for the Youth Opportunity Grants program to finance the third year of five-year competitive grants that provide education, training and support services to 63,000 youth in Empowerment Zones/Empowerment Communities (EZ/ECs). In addition, the bill provides \$1.1 billion for the Youth Activities Formula Grants to provide training and employment opportunities to an estimated 660,000 youth in FY 2001.

I am disappointed that the Congress has not provided \$255 million as requested for the Fathers Work/Families Win initiative. As a result, 80,000 non-custodial and low-income parents will not get the additional support to get a job or upgrade their skills.

The bill provides \$148 million for the Bureau of International Labor Affairs, an increase of \$78 million, or 112 percent, above last year's level. The legislation provides a total of \$82 million for efforts to address international child labor issues. I am pleased that my \$45 million request to expand the work of the International Labor Organization's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor was fully funded and that the bill provides \$37 million to support my new bilateral assistance initiative to improve access to basic education in developing countries.

The legislation also provides \$23 million to establish the Office of Disability Policy, Evalua-

tion and Technical Assistance. Headed by a new Assistant Secretary, this office will provide leadership in helping people with disabilities enter, re-enter, and remain in the workforce. In addition, I am pleased that the bill includes \$60 million to administer the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program to help workers who have developed illnesses associated with nuclear weapons production and testing.

The bill provides the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) with \$49.9 billion in funding, \$7.1 billion above the FY 2000 level.

I commend the Congress for fully funding my request of \$817 million for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, bringing the total level of the block grant to \$2 billion in FY 2001 and allowing nearly 150,000 additional children to be served. The bill also authorizes and provides \$20 million for the Early Learning Opportunities Act, which is similar to my Early Learning Fund proposal. Early Learning funds may be used to improve child care quality and promote school readiness through activities such as training parents to facilitate cognitive development and offering training, recruitment, and retention incentives for child care professionals.

The enrolled bill provides the largest increase for Head Start in the program's history. An increase of \$93 million over the FY 2000 enacted level will bring total program funding to \$6.2 billion, adding approximately 60,000 new slots for low-income children and continuing on the path to serve one million kids by FY 2002.

I am pleased that the enrolled bill fully funds the Family Caregivers program established in the recently reauthorized Older Americans Act at \$125 million. The program will provide information, respite care, and other support services to 250,000 families caring for loved ones who are ill or disabled.

The enrolled bill increases Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program funds by \$300 million for total non-emergency program funding of \$1.4 billion. These additional funds will help low-income families cope with continued high heating fuel prices. The bill also provides \$300 million in contingent emergency funds.

I strongly support the increase of \$2.5 billion, or 14 percent, over the FY 2000 level provided to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for biomedical research. The \$20.3 billion will enable NIH to continue to pursue new methods

for diagnosing, treating, and curing diseases such as cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and HIV/AIDS. The bill also provides \$130 million for the newly-established Center for Research on Minority Health and Health Disparities, which will coordinate and support NIH's trans-Institute, billion dollar research portfolio on minority health.

The bill provides \$3.9 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The increased funds will support: \$163 million for domestic and global HIV/AIDS prevention efforts; \$78 million to improve childhood immunizations; \$67 million for infectious disease activities; \$37 million for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health; and \$18 million for breast and cervical cancer screening activities.

I am pleased that this legislation provides \$357 million for the Congressional Black Caucus HIV/AIDS initiative, an increase of \$105 million above the FY 2000 enacted level of \$252 million. This will support an expanded scope of HIV/AIDS prevention, education, treatment, and outreach activities for minority community-based organizations working to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS in their communities.

I support the \$5.6 billion provided to the Health Resources and Services Administration, \$1 billion above the FY 2000 enacted level and \$890 million above the FY 2001 request. Increases over the FY 2000 level include: \$100 million to continue funding demonstration projects that address health care access for the uninsured; \$15 million for Family Planning; \$213 million for Ryan White activities; \$150 million for Community Health Centers; and, \$195 million for Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education. In addition, I am pleased that the bill provides \$550 million for the Ricky Ray Hemophilia Relief Fund Act so that additional relief payments may be made to hemophiliacs who contracted HIV/AIDS, and their families.

The bill provides \$2.9 billion for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services. Mental Health increases over the FY 2000 enacted level total \$151 million, including \$64 million for the Mental Health Block Grant, and \$25 million in new targeted grants for early intervention and prevention, as well as local capacity expansion. Substance abuse increases over the FY 2000 level total \$135 million, including \$65 million for the Substance Abuse Block Grant, \$42 million for substance abuse treatment grants and

\$28 million for substance abuse prevention grants.

The bill invests \$50 million in Real Choice Systems Change Grants to help States develop comprehensive plans to care for persons with disabilities in the most appropriate setting. These funds would be used to do the following: conduct intensive outreach efforts to educate people with disabilities about the home and community-based options currently available to them; streamline application and eligibility processes for home- and community-based care services; and modify State policy that results in the unnecessary institutionalization of people with disabilities.

The bill includes \$79 million for my Nursing Home Initiative, a \$32 million, or 68 percent, increase over the FY 2000 enacted level. This funding provides \$66 million for more rigorous inspections of nursing facilities and improved Federal oversight of nursing home quality, and grants to the States to develop ways for the disabled to move into community-based care rather than nursing homes. Congress also provided \$13.5 million for HHS' Office of the General Counsel and Departmental Appeals Board to address the backlog of nursing home appeals and handle increased legal advice, litigation support, and hearings on nursing home enforcement cases.

The bill provides a program level of \$270 million to the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research, \$70 million over the FY 2000 level, to expand research on the costs, uses, and quality of health care, and to enhance the Medical Expenditures Panel Surveys. This includes \$50 million for research on patient safety and the reduction of medical errors and \$10 million for research on health care worker safety.

I support the \$326 million to expand HHS' bioterrorism initiative. Congress fully funded my request of \$52 million for CDC's national pharmaceutical stockpile and provided \$168 million for CDC to expand national, State, and local epidemiologic laboratories, surveillance capacity for biological agents, strategic planning, and capabilities to screen toxicants.

The bill provides the Health Care Financing Administration's (HCFA's) program management with a total program level of \$2.3 billion, \$173 million, or eight percent, over the FY 2000 enacted level. This funding will support HCFA's efforts to strengthen its oversight of Medicare

contractors and efforts to ensure the quality and safety of nursing homes, non-accredited hospitals and other facilities. Funding is included for the National Medicare Education Program that educates beneficiaries, enabling them to make informed health decisions on topics like managed care, long-term care and supplemental insurance.

I am pleased that bill language was modified to allow the Secretary of Commerce to issue regulations in January that will protect the endangered Steller sea lion, not undermine the Endangered Species Act, and allow an appropriate level of fishing to resume in the affected Alaska fisheries. In addition, the bill provides \$50 million for research into the recovery of Steller sea lions, and for economic assistance to Alaskan fishing communities that may experience economic impacts from the new regulations. The bill sustains my Administration's long-standing commitment to protect the Nation's environmental laws from inappropriate and unrelated anti-environmental riders.

I am pleased that the bill does not include language prohibiting the promulgation of the Department of Labor's ergonomics standard. The standard, which was promulgated last month, seeks to prevent work-related injuries arising from risk factors such as repetitive motion or overexertion.

The bill extends the current availability period for Welfare-to-Work grant funds for an additional two years, allowing grantees the chance to take advantage of eligibility changes made in the FY 2000 Appropriations Act.

I am also pleased that the bill includes a provision to compensate beneficiaries of Federal programs who experienced a shortfall in their benefit payments as a result of the understatement of the Consumer Price Index that occurred in 1999. The bill provides that any compensation payments will be disregarded as income for purposes of means-tested programs. The bill also provides that the corrected CPI series for 1999 be taken into account for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code, effective for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2000.

I am very pleased that the legislation does not include language that would have restricted public health funds for emergency contraception health services in primary and secondary schools. I was strongly opposed to this language because decisions about what kinds of services

should be provided in school settings are more appropriately left to local decisionmakers, who can take into consideration their community's health needs.

I am very disappointed that Congress has mandated that all schools and libraries receiving Federal educational technology funds implement Internet filtering technology. Under the provisions of this bill, noncompliant schools and libraries will be ineligible for E-rate discounts and other Federal technology funds. My Administration has actively promoted the protection of children from harmful materials on the Internet, and I have been a strong supporter of locally driven efforts to make our schools and libraries safe portals for students to explore the World Wide Web. Because of the importance of protecting children from inappropriate material online, I believe that local development and implementation of an Internet-acceptable use plan is a more effective, appropriate solution than mandatory filtering for ensuring comprehensive protection while meeting the diverse needs of local schools and libraries. Although I am pleased that the required technological protection measures will be included as part of a locally developed policy, I would have preferred to allow communities more flexibility in developing appropriate policies by not imposing this potentially expensive and restrictive requirement. I am also concerned that because current technology may not be able to differentiate between harmful and non-harmful expression with precision, these provisions may have the effect of limiting access to valuable information in a manner that offends our tradition of freedom of speech. We will seek to implement the policy in a way that maximizes local flexibility and minimizes local burdens within the framework of the statute.

The bill includes a provision making clear that religious organizations may qualify for substance abuse prevention and treatment grants from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) on the same basis as other nonprofit organizations. The Department of Justice advises, however, that this provision would be unconstitutional to the extent that it were construed to permit governmental funding of organizations that do not or cannot separate their religious activities from their substance abuse treatment and prevention activities that are supported by SAMHSA aid. Accordingly, I construe the bill as forbidding the funding of

such organizations and as permitting Federal, State, and local governments involved in disbursing SAMHSA funds to take into account the structure and operations of a religious organization in determining whether such an organization is constitutionally and statutorily eligible to receive funding.

I am also pleased that, unlike earlier versions of the bill, the final bill excludes or modifies many provisions that would have changed our environmental protection and natural resource conservation laws without adequate public and congressional scrutiny. In particular, I am satisfied that a provision restricting the regulation of snowmobile use in national parks has been sufficiently modified to allow completion of a pending rule for Yellowstone National Park and two adjacent parks, so long as that rule does not reduce snowmobile use during the first two winter seasons.

The bill fully funds my IRS modernization and reform program for FY 2001. However, Congress denied a requested FY 2002 advance appropriation of \$422 million for IRS technology modernization. In addition, the bill provides only \$141 million of my \$225 million request for enhanced staffing to improve tax compliance and customer service activities.

I am pleased that the bill includes \$185 million for the Office of National Drug Control Policy's National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, as well as \$207 million for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas.

I am very disappointed that the bill continues objectionable current law provisions that restrict Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) coverage for abortions except in the cases where the life of the mother is endangered or the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest. The bill continues current law requirements that health plans participating in the FEHBP that provide prescription drug coverage must also provide prescription contraceptive coverage.

I am pleased that the bill provides funding and authority for priority agricultural conservation programs, including \$26 million for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and authority to spend existing funds on the Farmland Protection Program. These programs will improve our environment and protect our Nation's open spaces while boosting farm income.

There are several authorization bills included in H.R. 4577, including the Medicare, Medicaid, and the State Children's Health Insurance Pro-

gram (SCHIP) Benefits Improvement and Protection Act. This legislation provides States with increased allotments aimed at assisting hospitals serving significant numbers of low-income and uninsured patients; makes it easier for States to enroll uninsured children in Medicaid and SCHIP by permitting enrollment through schools, child support enforcement agencies, homeless shelters, program eligibility offices, and certain other sites; increases Medicaid reimbursements for federally qualified health centers and rural health centers; and directs HHS to issue the final Medicaid upper payment limit rule by December 31, 2000. The bill provides an additional \$70 million in FYs 2001 and 2002 and \$100 million in FY 2003 for the special diabetes programs at the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Indian Health Service.

The legislation also includes a two-year extension of the medical savings accounts program, which allows employers to make tax exempt contributions on behalf of employees to cover medical expenses.

I am disappointed that the bill fails to include my proposals to expand coverage to uninsured families; restore Medicaid and SCHIP benefits to immigrant pregnant women, children, and disabled individuals; and improve equity in Medicaid by allowing States to serve individuals in their homes and communities rather than in nursing homes. I am also disappointed that the bill does not include my proposal to bring payment rates for hospital services in Puerto Rico more in line with the rates that apply elsewhere in the country.

H.R. 4577 includes tax incentives and programs to help low-income people in distressed communities by encouraging private sector partners to increase investment and growth in low-income communities.

I am pleased that the bill includes the creation of a New Market tax incentive for investors that invest in equity investments in qualified low-income communities; an increase in the low-income housing volume caps for tax-exempt private activity bonds; and an expansion of eligibility for the brownfields tax incentive to cover all contaminated sites certified by a State, other than sites on the Superfund National Priorities List, and an extension through 2003.

The bill amends the Commodity Exchange Act (CEA) to provide regulatory relief for investors and authorize appropriations of such sums

as are necessary to carry out the CEA for FYs 2001–2005. The bill would deregulate most over-the-counter derivatives (financial instruments whose value depends on the value or change in value of an underlying security, commodity, or asset) traded electronically between sophisticated entities such as banks, broker/dealers, and high-net-worth individuals.

I support the reauthorization of a number of Small Business Administration programs in the bill, including my proposal to increase the number of small loans below \$150,000, reduce borrower fees, and improve technical assistance programs available to microentrepreneurs. The bill would also extend the authority for a number of expiring programs such as the Small Business Innovation Research and Small Disadvantaged Business programs. Finally, the bill authorizes the New Markets Venture Capital, New Markets Technical Assistance, and BusinessLINC programs, which provide authority for \$250 million in public and private capital for rural and urban small business investments, technical assistance, and mentoring services for aspiring entrepreneurs. The bill also authorizes establishment of a set-aside program for women-owned small businesses that are classified as economically disadvantaged or in an industry in which women owned businesses are substantially underrepresented.

I am pleased that this legislation amends immigration provisions included in the Commerce/Justice/State Appropriations Act thereby easing immigration restrictions on an estimated 700,000 immigrant families living in the United States. The provisions would extend section 245(i) until April 30, 2001, to allow aliens (and their spouses and children) who apply for an adjustment of status or a labor certification to remain in the United States until such petition is approved. Additionally, the provisions would create a new, temporary non-immigrant visa for spouses and children of spouses of legal permanent residents and U.S. citizens seeking to enter the United States to await approval of legal permanent resident status for themselves (the “V” visa). The provisions would also allow certain individuals who were not granted amnesty under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 who are currently seeking such relief through the courts to apply for permanent residency. While I am disappointed that the legislation fails to eliminate the disparate treatment under our immigration laws sought for Salvadorans, Guate-

malans, Hondurans, Haitians, and Liberians and does not provide any relief for deserving individuals affected by changes in the 1996 immigration law, it is the best compromise that could be reached after several rounds of intense negotiations.

H.R. 4577 also includes authorization for the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), a newly created agency that will focus \$20 million for area development and technical assistance on distressed counties in the Mississippi Delta Region. The authorization will permit the establishment of the DRA which will work to improve the economic status of some of our Nation’s most impoverished communities.

There are provisions in the Act that purport to condition my authority or that of certain officers to use funds appropriated by the Act on the approval of congressional committees. My Administration will interpret such provisions to require notification only, since any other interpretation would contradict the Supreme Court ruling in *INS v. Chadha*.

Section 620 of the Treasury/General Government Appropriations section of the Act prohibits the use of appropriations to pay the salary of any Federal Government officer or employee who interferes with certain communications between Federal employees and Members of Congress. I do not interpret this provision to detract from my constitutional authority and that of my appointed heads of departments to supervise and control the operations and communications of the executive branch, including the control of privileged and national security information.

Another provision of the Act raises Appointments Clause concerns. Subsection 111(b) of the Small Business Reauthorization Act of 2000 portion of the bill provides joint grant-making authority to the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, who is a constitutional officer, and to two other officials, who are not. In order to avoid an Appointments Clause problem raised by this provision, I will interpret that subsection as giving the Administrator the final say concerning selection of grant recipients after consultation with the other designated officials.

Section 313 of the Legislative Branch Appropriations portion of the Act would establish in the legislative branch a “Center for Russian Leadership Development.” The principal function of the Center would be to administer a grant program to support visits to this country by Russian nationals. I fully support the goals

of this grant program. The Department of Justice advises me, however, that because the program is not administered by the executive branch, it is unconstitutional. I urge the Congress to enact new legislation reassigning the Center to an executive branch agency.

Several provisions of the Act also raise concerns under the Recommendations Clause. These provisions purport to require a Cabinet Secretary or other Administration official to make recommendations to Congress on changes in law. To the extent that those provisions would require Administration officials to provide Congress with policy recommendations or draft legislation, I direct these officials to treat any such requirements as precatory.

In addition, I hereby designate the following amounts as emergency requirements for the De-

partment of Defense, pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control act of 1985, as amended: \$100,000,000 provided to the Overseas Contingency Operations Transfer account and \$150,000,000 provided to the Operations and Maintenance, Navy account in H.R. 5666, as enacted by H.R. 4577.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
December 21, 2000.

NOTE: H.R. 4577, approved December 21, was assigned Public Law No. 106-554. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 22.

Message on the Observance of Eid Al-Fitr, 2000 *December 22, 2000*

On behalf of the American people, it is my honor to congratulate Muslims around the world on the occasion of the Eid Al-Fitr.

Whether native-born or immigrants from Africa, the Middle East, Asia, or Europe, Muslims now represent an increasingly important element in the tapestry of American society. Because of the growth of Islam in our country, American citizens of all faiths are coming to appreciate the significance of Ramadan as Muslims fast, pray, and rededicate themselves to the teachings of the Qur'an.

United in faith, America's Muslims are also united in their commitment to building a society rich in diversity and grounded in mutual respect. I believe America is made stronger by the core values of Islam—commitment to family, compassion for the disadvantaged, and respect for difference.

There is special significance this year as the three Abrahamic faiths all celebrate holidays in the span of the same week. As Jews celebrate Hanukkah, Christians celebrate Christmas, and now Muslims celebrate Eid Al-Fitr. The Qur'an, the Bible, and the Torah all call on believers to love one's neighbors and to welcome strangers. The Qur'an tells us that we are all People of the Book and that we share a common humanity and dignity.

As the appearance of the new moon brings to a close this holy month, we all pray that it will usher in a year of reconciliation and peace. The First Lady and I wish all Muslims a blessed celebration of the Eid Al-Fitr and peace, health, and prosperity in the years ahead.

Eid mubarak.

BILL CLINTON